

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection and the allowance of all claims now pending in the above-identified patent application (*i.e.*, Claims 10, 13 and 15-17) are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

At the outset, it should be recognized that the present invention, as now most broadly claimed, provides a truck or trailer isolator assembly apparatus in which the air brakes of the truck or trailer remain “on” in a locked position when the truck or trailer is in a detached state until authorized personnel are able to unlock the braking system and move the trailer. As is well known in the prior art, when a trailer is disconnected, its air brakes are normally in an actuated mode. When the trailer is re-connected to a tractor or truck, compressed air is able to pass through a supply line for permitting disengagement of the air braking system. While the air brakes are necessarily in a locked state when the trailer is detached, thereby permitting a significant safety advantage, the ability of the air brakes to be controlled by mere connection to a tractor’s braking system renders security of the trailer, at best, problematic.

Applicant’s invention, as now most broadly claimed, avoids the drawbacks known to the prior art by providing a trailer isolator assembly, which includes only a single valve which is connected to an inlet of a trailer compressed air supply line, so that in a “closed” state, the valve permits compressed air to pass into and through the air supply line to the braking system and, while in an “open” state, the single valve causes a diversion of the passage of compressed air from the braking system and causes air in the compressed air

supply line to be exhausted from the valve through an exhaust line. The diversion of the compressed air away from the compressed air supply, when in an “open” position, avoids the possibility of the compressed air “building up” in the truck/trailer isolator assembly. The present invention, as claimed, further includes a housing for the single valve with the housing being connected to a trailer braking system and accessible via a lockable door.

As will be explained in greater detail hereinafter, nowhere in the prior art is such a novel and efficient trailer and truck isolator assembly, which includes only a single valve for maintaining the air brakes of a trailer in a locked condition when the trailer is in a detached state until unlocked by authorized personnel, notwithstanding any unauthorized attempt to disengage the brakes by the provision of compressed air, and in which the single valve acts to divert the compressed air away from the compressed air supply when in an “open” position, which avoids any possibility of the compressed air “building up” in the assembly, either disclosed or suggested.

By the present amendments, Applicant has amended independent Claim 10 (and all remaining claims via dependency), to now recite that the “single valve” of the invention, when in an “open” state, acts to --divert[ ] the passage of compressed air from the braking system.-- Claim 10 has further been amended to specify that the “single valve” is connected to --an inlet-- of the trailer’s compressed air supply. As will be explained, it is submitted that independent Claim 10, as now amended, is patentably distinguishable over the prior art.

Applicant’s Specification has also been amended (at page 5) for the purpose of

attending to various informalities.

Turning now, in detail, to an analysis of the Examiner's prior art rejection, in the third Office Action the Examiner has now rejected independent Claim 10 (and various dependent claims) as being anticipated, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §102(b), by Harless *et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,145,240. It is the Examiner's contention that Harless *et al.* discloses a single valve (44, 140) that is connected only to a trailer compressed air supply line (16) with the single valve being capable of permitting the passage of compressed air through the trailer compressed air supply line to a braking system when the single valve is in a closed state, while air is exhausted from the compressed air supply line from the single valve through an exhaust line when the single valve is open (the Examiner citing to Col. 4 of Harless *et al.*), thereby contending that Harless *et al.* anticipates Applicant's Claim 10, as most recently examined.

In reply to the Examiner's 35 U.S.C. §102(b) anticipation rejection applying Harless *et al.*, which discloses an air brake safety and anti-theft valve assembly, as can be readily seen from FIG. 1 of the applied reference, the valve control assembly (30) of Harless *et al.* is coupled to a brake line via a T-connector (35) and a line (37). Compressed air is therefore supplied to the valve control assembly (30), through the brake line (16) and the line (37), such that the valve of the control assembly, when in a "closed" position, allows air to "build up" in the brake line (16) for releasing the brakes. (See, Harless *et al.* at Col. 4, lines 57 – 66) As the system of Harless *et al.* locates the valve control assembly (30) near the rear doors of the trailer, when the trailer is

connected to a truck, compressed air flows from the truck through the entirety of the system before it is received at the valve of the valve control assembly (30). The valve control assembly (30) of Harless et al. in no way acts as a bypass system for diverting air flow away from the brakes, in sharp contrast to that now recited in Applicant's amended independent Claim 10, but, instead, bleeds air from the brake system after the compressed air passes through the brake system. Such a system, as described by the applied prior art, has a particular risk of malfunctioning in the event that the valve of the valve control assembly (30) becomes blocked or restricted, or should there exist a blockage or restriction in the air supply line, such that air pressure within the air supply line is raised to a level sufficient for initiating disconnection of the air brakes. Consequently, by placement of the valve at the end of the air supply line, such that it receives compressed air after that compressed air has travelled through the brake line, the air brake system disclosed by Harless et al. has considerable drawbacks.

With reference to the present invention, it is taught at Page 2, ¶ 2, of Applicant's *Specification* that the claimed invention pertains to "a trailer isolator assembly which includes a mechanically operable valve means which is connected to a trailer compressed air supply such that in a closed state the valve permits compressed air to pass through the supply line to a braking system." In Applicant's *Specification* at Page 5, it is stated that the present invention provides "means [for] diverting the air flow in the air brake supply line thereby maintaining the brakes of the trailer in an 'on' position." Applicant's FIG. 1 further shows the manner in which the claimed apparatus diverts compressed air away from the spring brakes (6), so as to avoid any build-up of pressure within the air supply

line. It is the fact that the valve of the present invention, as now recited in amended independent Claim 10, diverts the compressed air away from the compressed air supply (13), when in the open position, which avoids any possibility of compressed air building up in Applicant's system, which may inadvertently cause the brakes to release. Such an arrangement also functions to exhaust air from the storage tanks associated with the trailer, due to the pressure differential created in the system with the single valve being located at the entry point to the air supply line.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully contended that the Examiner's 35 U.S.C. §102(b) anticipation rejection of independent Claim 10, as part of the third Office Action, which applies Harless *et al.*, has now been overcome and should be appropriately withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully contended that all claims now pending in the above-identified patent application (*i.e.*, Claims 10, 13 and 15-17) recite a novel and efficient trailer and truck isolator assembly, which includes only a single valve for maintaining the air brakes of a trailer in a locked condition when the trailer is in a detached state until unlocked by authorized personnel, notwithstanding any unauthorized attempt to disengage the brakes by the provision of compressed air, and in which the single valve acts to divert the compressed air away from the compressed air supply when in an "open" position, which avoids the possibility of the compressed air building up in the trailer isolator assembly, which is patentably distinguishable over the prior art.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the outstanding rejection and the allowance of all claims now pending are respectfully requested and earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

BARRY JOHN BRYAR

By   
Edwin D. Schindler  
*Attorney for Applicant*  
Reg. No. 31,459

**PTO Customer No. 60333**

4 High Oaks Court  
P. O. Box 4259  
Huntington, New York 11743-0777

(631)474-5373

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Enc.: 1. Petition for Three-Month Extension of Time for Response; and,  
2. EFT for \$635.00 (Three-Month Extension Fee).

The Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge the Deposit Account of Applicant's Attorney (*Account No. 19-0450*) for any fees or costs pertaining to the prosecution of the above-identified patent application, but which have not otherwise been provided for.